

The Richmond ReView

Vol. 3 No. 7

FREE

April 1991

Balboa Street's face-lift page 3



Tales of the Easter Wolf page 6

Scrambling for eggs



ON THE TOWN - Underprivileged children enjoy an Easter egg hunt at the University of San Francisco campus. Earlier, the youths enjoyed a meal from the Cafe Rigolo. Story on page 10.

Community responds to homeless center

by Harry J. Johnson

The new homeless family center, scheduled to open April 15, has some outer Richmond District residents and merchants concerned about possible increased vagrancy and crime in the area.

Formerly a residence for seniors, the four-story building at 6324 Geary Blvd., near 27th Avenue - across from Cala Foods - will serve as a temporary home for 10 to 15 families, according to Joseph Hill, program director for the service organization responsible for the shelter, the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The lease was signed Feb. 6. Part of the \$10,000 monthly payments will go toward the Society's purchase of the building, said Hill. The City is picking up \$450,000 of the project's \$1.5 million annual budget.

Another part of the program, a plan to allow families not living at the center to participate has been put on hold pending community input.

Hill, who has been working with the homeless for more than 12 years, said there will not be drop-in services at the new Richmond Hills Family Center. Each family must be referred by a social services agency. Transportation will be provided to the residence, he said, and participants will be kept busy with classes and activities seven days a week. Rent, clothing and three meals a day will also be provided free to residents.

Hill said a typical family will likely be composed of a single mother with one or two infant children. Each parent entering the facility will be required to sign a contract which requires intensive program participation.

Parents will have a very structured daily routine and child care will be provided when necessary, said Hill. The activities program, administered by Catholic Charities of San Francisco, will include workshops on health care, mental health, parenting skills, basic literacy, managing money, using government services, and drug and alcohol dependency awareness. Two vans will be used to transport residents to program activities in other areas of the City.

Accommodations at the homeless center are plain but comfortable, according to Hill. The upper floor north side rooms have a view of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Twenty staff members will be working with the residents, Hill said. He estimates a stay of six to eight weeks before a family is

ready to move to another more advanced program or into rental housing.

Hill said the primary reason a middle-class neighborhood like the outer Richmond District was chosen is the wholesome environment, relatively free of the illegal drugs and crime influences common in areas such as the Tenderloin.

Hill said the residents, who will be in family units, are more motivated to return to the mainstream of society than the individual adult homeless population.

As many as 60 percent of homeless individuals, Hill estimates, including those who are mentally handicapped or drug addicted, prefer remaining homeless to participating in structured programs.

But it's the intransigent homeless individuals that the locals are worried about.

One concerned citizen is Jim Lazarus, president of the Planning Association for the Richmond, and vice president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

"Nobody knows much about the project. Nobody (in the neighborhood) heard about it until Feb. 27," said Lazarus, who last year came close to being elected to the City Board of Supervisors. He said although he is not necessarily against the project, there are still unanswered questions.

"We're most concerned about the Catholic Charities part that will bring in homeless people from the outside.

"Who are the clientele?" asked Lazarus. "Will there be hard-core homeless? I'm sure Cala Foods would like to know if they're going to be begging in front of the store."

Because of neighborhood concerns, plans to open the daytime program to families not living at the center have been put on hold pending the formation of a community advisory committee that will address neighborhood concerns and fears, according to

Continued on back page



Richmond Hills Family Center

'Mystery is the key' to life, says retired Richmond District pastor

by Jacqueline Urbanek

"I know for sure that my granddaughter loves me, I know for sure that I have many reasons to be happy about the blessings of this life," says the Reverend Max Christensen, "but my beliefs end there pretty much."

Prime rib and lobster may be on menu for Beach Chalet

The quest to open the famous Beach Chalet at Ocean Beach as a restaurant continues.

The Chart House (restaurant) Group worked for several months to open a restaurant at the chalet, but negotiation attempts failed, according to Dennis Chan, property manager for the SF Recreation and Park Department.

Chan said, however, that a new "solid proposal" is being considered with a group that wants to make the chalet a prime rib and lobster restaurant, with a bar and other related activities, including banquets and parties.

The 64-year-old Beach Chalet

Christensen, a Richmond District resident for almost 40 years, held a tenure of nearly three decades as pastor of the St. James' Episcopal Church (California Street at Ninth Avenue) and is still active in retirement.

In addition to parish duties at St. James as rector and pastor,

has been vacant since 1981. It was designed by Willis Polk and features Depression-era murals by Lucien Labaudt.

About \$1.2 million of an estimated \$3 million worth of renovations has been completed on the chalet, paid for by City funds, but it is expected that the new tenant may have to pick up the balance.

The Finance Committee of the Recreation and Park Commission is slated to consider a recommendation that negotiations continue with the group, which Chan said is "reasonable and motivated."

"Staff wants to commence negotiations," he said.

Christensen was also active in the community's founding of the Planning Association for the Richmond with Rabbi Saul White. In 1964, he founded an early education center, with a specialized program for retarded youngsters.

"There was a need for more than a custodial context for children, and the founding of a preschool and kindergarten really filled a need for the Richmond community," Christensen said.

Raised in a Danish family in Nebraska, he spent his first 16 years in a small town surrounded by miles of wheat, corn, and alfalfa fields. He was ten when Wall Street crashed.

"Though we were poor, I was shielded from the ugly," Christensen said, reflecting how the local drugstore kept newspapers for sale in a pile and how people would drop their two pennies on the sidewalk.

"No one ever stole the pennies," he said, "and there were hungry people in food lines. People just didn't steal back then."

Continued on page 9

Planners puzzled by leaky lake in Golden Gate Park

by Karol Dietrich

With the restoration of the Chain of Lakes project nearing completion, park officials are keeping a watchful eye on the water table of North Lake.

The Chain of Lakes, sometimes referred to as the North, Middle and South lakes, begins at 43rd Avenue and Fulton Street and strands across Golden Gate Park to Lincoln Boulevard. The restoration of the lakes began in 1982.

While South and Middle lakes are completely restored, North Lake is currently under construction. The southern part of North

Lake is not part of the current restoration contract and will remain dry until a future date.

"The 120-day contract began in late December 1990 for North Lake, and we expect it to be complete on time," said Jim Rogers, assistant superintendent of parks for Golden Gate Park.

Rogers added that the lake is presenting contractors with a slight problem.

"When the clay bottom geo-texture lining, which park lakes require in order to keep water from draining out, was installed, we partially filled the lake and soon realized it was draining on its

own, which can only mean it's still leaking."

Park planner Deborah Learner explained that this is not unusual with the lakes in the park, "because they are all man-made and exist above sand dunes."

An elaborate system is used to keep water in the lakes, Learner explained, and from time to time the lakes must be drained and relined.

The geo-texture lining is mostly a clay filling between a plastic lining and ordinary soil. Learner said that once the clay (a bentonite mixture) is placed on the bottom of the lake bed, water is pumped in.

But sometimes the vegetation surrounding the lake develops a root structure on or near the clay-bottom lining, causing a perpetual problem of seepage from the lake into the underground water table, which eventually drains out to the ocean.

North Lake was mentioned by Learner as a possible culprit in the contamination of Steinhart Aquarium's saltwater system a couple of years ago, a charge she denies.

"There is absolutely no way a single park lake can be named in contaminating any other water system that exists in the park," Learner said.

"The underground waterways and park water pipes all lead to the Pacific Ocean. Near one of the park's waste water outlets is the intake line for the aquarium's saltwater filtration system. It's impossible to single out North Lake as the source for creating brackish water (a combination of fresh- and saltwater) in the aquarium's system," said Learner.

Public information spokesperson at Steinhart Aquarium, Anne



The leaking North Lake in GG Park at Fulton Street, 41st Avenue.

Eagan said, "when it was determined that our saltwater was becoming brackish, we systematically reviewed our entire water system. We determined that fresh water was leaching out near our intake lines during low tides.

Subsequently, we corrected our intake line at Ocean Beach.

"We'll bring North Lake back to the people who enjoy a stroll around the naturalness of a city park lake, and we'll re-stock it with the golden carp, Rogers said.

Mayor Agnos promotes District drought fair

Urging San Franciscans to continue water conservation efforts, Mayor Art Agnos announced two plans to help lower water usage in the City.

Despite the downpours at the end of March, San Francisco's water system is currently one million acre-feet (equaling three years of water use) short of capacity, he said.

"The good news is that we have gotten significant rain lately, but the bad news is that we are still in the midst of the most serious drought in record-

ed California history," Agnos said.

The first of the mayor's two plans to help stave off the effects of the drought is a series of ten free "Neighborhood Water Conservation Fairs." The fairs will feature demonstrations and sales of water-saving fixtures, advice on drought-resistant plants and gardening, and answers to questions about rationing and conservation techniques.

Continued on page 8

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Balboa to wear new topcoat

by Meg Dixit

Balboa Street, from Arguello Boulevard to the Great Highway, will be repaved in a five-month project supervised by the Department of Public Works beginning January 1992.

The entire cost of the project is \$1.4 million funded in part by a \$1.1 million grant from the federal government because Balboa Street, a primary artery of the Richmond District, is part of the City's five-year Federal Aid Urban Program (FAUP). The City's supplement budget for the project totals \$318,000, generated from gas and sales taxes. The design, engineering and construction of the project will be covered by this.

"The failure in the pavement, the cracks on the surfaces and the visibility of the base underneath the ground will be covered up and repainted, making a ride on Balboa Street smoother," said Joe Ovadia, project manager of the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Traffic and parking along the street is not expected to be disrupted, according to Ovadia, because the DPW's contract restricts work on more than three blocks at a time and during rush hours (8 to 10 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.).

The project is scheduled to start after Muni completes the digging along Balboa Street to install underground cables for the electrification of the 31 Balboa bus line. As soon as this is completed, DPW will begin the repaving.

John Katz, Muni transit planner, said the Balboa bus, which will be an electrical bus line in January 1992, will not be re-routed during the repavement.

The Finance Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors has not yet released the funds to the DPW because no one is assigned the job of reconstruction. Once the DPW finalizes the plans and designs, it will advertise the project twice in the City's official newspaper, which advertises job contracts. The lowest bidder will be awarded the contract. The federal government

Disabled adults working to improve neighborhood

Members of Opportunities Unlimited observed California Arbor Day March 7 by helping Recreation and Park Department Urban Foresters plant four new "specimen" cypress trees along Transverse Drive in Golden Gate Park.

The center for developmentally disabled adults at 378 18th Ave. concentrates on helping members learn social, pre-vocational and vocational skills.

Members take pride in contributing important services to their greater community.

Each week two teams spend a morning picking up litter in two areas of Golden Gate Park. Members also maintain four plots at the Argonne Community Garden.

The goal of the program is to help individuals become more independent and self-reliant, according to director Jim Wenninger. For information on the center, call 387-8405.



Photo: Sybil Boutiller

requires this done by Aug. 15.

The DPW will give priority to Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and Women's Business Enterprises (WBE) for the repavement contract in compliance with an ordinance on all City contracts passed by the Board of Supervisors in July 1989.

Another street repavement project covered in the FAUP will be Lake Street from Arguello Boulevard to 14th Avenue. This project is still in its planning stage

and the preliminary cost estimate is \$300,000. Lake Street is expected to take three months to repave.

Masonic Avenue, from Presidio Avenue to Fell Street, was repaved three months ago.

Nelson Wong, Project Division Manager of the DPW, said that, with the repavement of Balboa Street, the main arteries of the Richmond District would be repaired and smaller repavement projects would be done directly by City workers.



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Corporate coffers open for school and community center



OFF TO VALLEY FORGE! Harriet Johnson's fifth grade class poses for a picture. The class heads to Philadelphia, New York City, Washington D.C. and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania at the end of April for an educational venture into the United States' history.

Donations from students' families and hard work by the class, such as bake sales, helped pay for the trip. The class's fundraising effort also got

a helping hand when the Catellus Development Corporation donated \$540 to help sponsor a student short on financial resources.

Standing in the back row of the picture are Alamo Elementary School Principal Dorthy Quinones, Catellus Development Corporation Project Manager Julie Gonzalez Burns, Harriet Johnson and Deborah Dubin, community relations representative at Catellus.



ALEXANDRIA GLAZUNOVE (left), director of the Russian American Community Center, holds up two checks totaling \$1,600. The donation was presented by Wells Fargo Bank, which supports non-profit groups with assistance. The center provides free meals, income tax assistance, English lessons, foot screenings and other services.

Pictured with Glazunove are George Patterson, president of the Geary merchants association, Virginia Ziolkoski, manager of Wells' Geary/Arguello office and Helen Harris of the Clement Street branch.

Poison-proofing homes helps ensure children's safety, protection

Each day an estimated 7,000 children under five are accidentally poisoned in the United States. Many of these accidents might have been prevented.

Accidental poisonings can happen quickly. One moment is all it takes. Young children will eat or drink almost anything they get their hands on. Most household poisonings involve one or more of an estimated 900 products found in the average home.

The San Francisco Bay Area Regional Poison Control Center at San Francisco General Hospital urges parents to poison-

proof their homes to safeguard their children against accidental poisonings.

Thomas Kearney, managing director of the center and a UC San Francisco Associate clinical professor of pharmacy, recommends the following:

- Store cleaning supplies out of sight and out of reach of children.
- Use child-resistant safety latches on storage cupboard doors.
- Use child-resistant containers when you can. But, remember, they are child-resistant, not childproof.

- When using cleaning supplies or medicine, keep them in your sight. Don't leave them around the house.

- Keep products in their original containers. Some serious poisonings of children and adults occur when medicines or household products are stored in familiar drink or food containers.

- Never let children think medicine is candy. And do not take medicine in the presence of children. They may get the idea of taking medicine on their own like mommy or daddy does.

- Keep a bottle of syrup of ipecac (it causes vomiting) in an easily accessible place, out of the reach of children. Always call the poison control center or your physician before using ipecac because it can be harmful if used improperly.

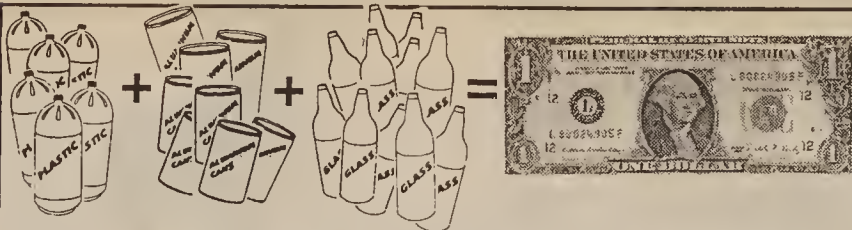
The San Francisco Poison Control Center

hotline number for emergencies is 476-6600 and is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by experienced clinical pharmacists.

Poison center hotline staff have special training in toxicology and have access to comprehensive files, tests and computerized poison information on toxicity of drugs. A 24-hour interpreter service is available to help those who do not speak English.

The Poison Control Center, which serves over four million residents of the Bay Area and Northern California, was established in 1979 with the collaboration of the UC San Francisco School of Pharmacy and the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

As part of a continuing effort to reach the public, a health education specialist, Elise Stone, is available to answer non-emergency questions about poison prevention. She can be reached at 821-8554.



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Examinations commence for new public school textbooks

The new history and social science textbooks being considered for adoption by the San Francisco Unified School District have been sent to each school site.

The kindergarten through fifth-grade materials are at elementary schools, the sixth- through eighth-grade materials at middle schools and the United States history and government textbooks are at high schools.

Interested parents are invited to review the textbooks and submit written comments

on them by Friday, April 5, 1991.

A history and social science consultation will be conducted on Saturday, April 13 from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the Parkside Center, 2550 25th Ave., Room 10.

The consultation will offer parents and community members the opportunity to learn about the textbook and the textbook adoption process and to give written comments on the textbooks.

Call Dr. Roger Tom at 241-6286 for more information.

Donating food locally to help feed the City's downtrodden

Richmond District residents wishing to help feed the hungry on City streets can go to the First Interstate Bank branch in Laurel Village, which is collecting food throughout the year for distribution to the needy.

The branch accepts most food items except fresh food, which cannot be properly refrigerated to prevent spoilage.

However, all types of canned food and drinks, bottled juice, rice, pasta, spaghetti sauce, dry cereal, flour and baking mixes are needed.

Collections to fill the trash-can-sized barrel at the branch started Valentine's Day, Feb. 14.

"We've gotten a barrel and a half already," reports Julius Chiang, branch manager at First Interstate, regarding the first six weeks of the program.

Locals can also donate food to Project Open Hand's Food Bank for AIDS patients on the second Saturday of each month at the Cala Supermarket at Geary Boulevard and Fourth Avenue. Call 252-1931 for more information.

The location for dropping food items at the First Interstate Bank is 3431 California St., in Laurel Village. Parking is available in a lot behind the shopping center.

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Celebrating with tale of rabbit, wolf and magic fish

by Rebecca Geiger

The guitar is strummed, the flute is played and the children sit on the floor expectantly. Look out — here comes Easter Wolf, Easter Rabbit, and Magic Fish.

Through the voice of Adela Bishop, the hands of Robin Goodfellow and the children's imaginations, these magical creatures come alive.

Bishop and Goodfellow were at Quinby's bookstore in Laurel Village as part of Quinby's Special Holiday Events series.

Bishop, an attractive dark-haired woman, dressed entirely in purple, played the guitar and read

from her new book, "The Easter Wolf." This is her first published book and the first time she has collaborated with Goodfellow.

"One idea behind the readings is to stimulate kids' imaginations," she said.

The audience, consisting of four kids, two moms, one baby and a dad, sit attentively.

"We're going to tell a story about a wolf," Bishop tells the audience.

Goodfellow, with her long blonde hair, flowing skirt and peasant blouse, sits on a stool playing the flute and creating magical paper cutouts of the book's characters, while Bishop's

story develops.

She has been making cutouts for years at her business, Fantasies In Paper, in Oakland and can make an animal in less than a minute, with a few deft strokes of the scissors. Goodfellow uses two small pieces of colored paper, and with a snip here and a snip there, colorful creatures emerge, illustrating the story of the Easter Wolf.

Bishop begins reading the story of Easter Rabbit and White Hen, who hide baskets of eggs every Easter. One year, however, it snows so much that they are late, and in their frenzy to hide the eggs, they are caught by a wolf, who steals their eggs.

A blonde girl in the audience looks skeptical. Her neighbor, a brown-haired, blue-eyed boy in a 49ers jacket, looks curious.

Bishop continues the story, and the children learn that the rabbit and hen escape and meet Rainbow Fish. The wolf, however, falls into the water, and begins to drown.

"Help, help," he cries.

The rabbit decides to save him, and the grateful wolf then helps hide their eggs. Thereafter, he helps every Easter and becomes known as the Easter Wolf.

"The end," says Bishop.

Everyone claps, and Goodfellow quickly shapes a red and yellow wolf out of paper. She then prompts the children with questions.

"Did you like the story of the Easter Wolf?" she asks. "Would you like this wolf?"

The children nod, and one boy crawls over to Goodfellow to get the paper wolf. Goodfellow then makes a pink and white Easter rabbit and hands it to a small girl, clutching a Snoopy dog. As new children join the circle,



Photo: Rebecca Geiger

Curious youngsters crowd around Robin Goodfellow, making paper cutouts, and Adela Bishop, strumming the guitar.

Goodfellow makes rabbits, wolves, and fish for them.

Bishop again strums on her guitar.

"What do we do with the sleepy children?" she sings. Goodfellow continues to cut animals and the kids play with their toys.

"This old man, he know one," Bishop sings.

"I'm five. Do five," cries one little boy.

Bishop continues the song, while Goodfellow makes a rainbow fish. All the children gather around to watch her cut the fish from a piece of sponge. She then paints it, giving it eyes and stripes. When she dips the fish into a small bowl of water, it expands. The children are amazed and even parents come over to see.

Several new children join the circle. Goodfellow plays the flute,

and Bishop begins the story again.

The children listen attentively as Goodfellow creates a new menagerie of red, yellow, pink and white animals.

"What animals are in the story?" she asks.

"The rabbit," answers a young girl in a ballet costume.

The girl is congratulated for being a good thinker, and is rewarded promptly with her own paper rabbit.

As a mother lines up to get her book autographed, the children play with their animals. Goodfellow plays the flute, and continues to make cutouts. She asks all the children to drop their fish in the water and watch them expand.

The guitar-strumming begins again. This time it is the Hokey Pokey. The flute joins in. The children laugh, smile, and let their imaginations run wild.

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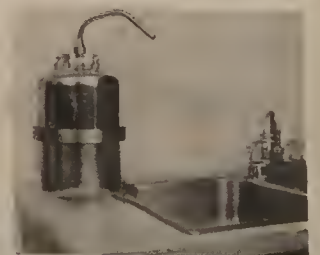
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Under The Counter Unit



Counter Top Unit

The San Francisco Public Library will celebrate National Library Week – April 14 to 20 – with events city-wide. "Read. Succeed." is the theme for 1991.

The Richmond District Library on Ninth Avenue is celebrating by inviting everyone to meet two local authors, Margit Roos-Collins and Michael Castleman at the library on Wednesday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Collins, a District resident, is the author of "The Flavors of Home: A Guide to Wild Edible Plants of the San Francisco Bay Area." She covers everything from seaweed to tree bark, combining preparation tips with anecdotes from personal experience.

Castleman's book compares traditional uses of herbs with modern medical expertise regarding their use in "The Healing Herb: The Complete Guide to the Curative Powers of Nature's Medicine."

Local elected officials, radio, television and newspaper personalities will join with other authors to read for libraries and literacy on the evenings of April 16 and 17 at branches around the City.

The Main library is featuring original manuscripts and artwork from children's books in the library rotunda through April 25 as part of an exhibit celebrating the evolution of children's books.

Richmond resident Marilyn Sachs' 1990 work, the "Big Book for Peace," is included, and there are several San Francisco-based children's stories.

Friends of the SF Public Library are planning a special book sale in front of the Main Library on Tuesday, April 16.

The sale, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. is offering fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children for 50 cents each. Proceeds will support the special events and

programs presented by the Friends.

You can celebrate National Library Week by doing something for your library. Budget decisions at the City and state level are being made now for the coming fiscal year.

Your input is vital if the library's budget is to reflect your priorities.

"Libraries are the memory of mankind, the storehouse that contains all which is known and has been thought. Were some holocaust to destroy all intellectual institutions except libraries, all could be re-created.

"But if the libraries were destroyed, all other institutions in the world could not re-create them."

- James Thomas Flexner, 1979
New York Public Library



As unimaginable as the idea of the sudden, wholesale destruction of libraries is, San Franciscans are now living with the slow erosion of library services, which will, if unchecked, amount to the same thing.

Many of us grew up with a neighborhood library and, although we may not often visit our local library, we take for granted that, if we need something from the library, it will be there.

Well, it won't be, unless the practice of reducing the library budget each year is reversed.

San Franciscans are unusually partial to their libraries – 52 percent of the residents have



Laura Jacoby/Chatham

library cards (in comparable cities, the card-carrying population is about 33 percent).

We are especially loyal to our branch libraries. Whenever the question of budget cuts come up – as it does yearly – there is active opposition to the closure of any branches. The result has been that services throughout the system are reduced.

The libraries are open fewer hours; they are staffed by fewer librarians; and fewer books are being purchased.

Currently, only 7 percent of the SF Library's overall budget goes for book purchases – less than half the percentage recommended by the American Library Association.

The library of my childhood is open – as it always was – from nine to nine, Monday through Thursday and nine to five on Friday and Saturday. (It is closed on Sunday, but so are a lot of places in Missouri.)

There's the head librarian, the reference librarian and the children's librarian. The reading center is a low, round table covered with magazines and newspapers and surrounded by cushioned chairs.

In San Francisco, a reading center is what's left when a branch library has been reduced to a minimal operating state. A reading center is open four days a week for a total of 20 hours and is staffed by one library technician assisted by a page and visited by a children's librarian.

There are now five reading centers in the San Francisco Public Library system; none are in the Richmond District. However, that may soon change.

In response to an overall library revenue shortfall of \$250,000 for the fiscal year 1991/92, the Presidio library (currently closed for renovations) has been named by the SF Public Library as one of five branches facing possible reclassification as a reading center.

Other budget-cutting suggestions under consideration include closing the Main library on Sunday, increasing the use of volunteers and closing the entire system for more days each year.

Library staff is already voluntarily working reduced schedules and taking days off without pay. Vacated positions are deliberately left unfilled as long as possible.

Write to Governor Pete Wilson, who is currently planning to slash the state Public Library Fund from \$16 million to \$10 million, which will reduce San Francisco's library budget by \$175,000. Tell him

what a bad idea this is. Tell him we want more money for libraries, not less.

Address your letter to: The Honorable Pete Wilson, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

You can also write to senators Quentin Kopp and Milton Marks at that same address. While you're at it, send copies to Assembly members Willie L. Brown, Jr., John Burton and Jackie Speier, also at the State Capitol.

Send another letter to Mayor Art Agnos with copies to Sam Yockey, Budget Director and Susan Andrus, Budget Office. They get their mail at City Hall, San Francisco, 94102.

The SF Board of Supervisors Finance Committee's current budget proposal calls for an additional \$75,000 in cuts to the library. Committee members are Jim Gonzalez, Terrence Hallinan and Kevin Shelley. Letters to them should also go to City Hall.

For more information about how to help restore our public library system, call Keep Libraries Alive! at 641-0561 or Friends of the San Francisco Public Library at 557-4257.

San Francisco's libraries are in big trouble and this is no April Fool's joke.

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Land's End flourishes with locals and imports alike

by Al Kurz

Exploring the area around Land's End reveals a diversified and exotic blend of wild life.

Where one might expect to find barren sand dunes, dozens of communities of exotic plants, amphibians, snakes, mammals and birds coexist. Today's wildlife scenario is a mixture of native and imported species.

The earliest European explorers of San Francisco described the level part of Land's End (where the Lincoln Park golf course now is) as a wildflower and grassland field mesa made of sandy soil.

Parts of the western Land's End area is still freshwater marshes, as it was before Victorian times, and there are native riparian willows on the cliffs near fresh water springs. As well, willow thickets still shelter many birds.

But most of the habitat of the western part of the Richmond District is from the time people conquered the wilderness.

The grizzly bear, coyote and elk disappeared about the time of the Gold Rush, and deer have since left for less-populated areas.

Today, much of Land's End, including Lincoln and Sutro Heights parks and the golf course, is covered by non-native species of grass and tree plantings from the US Army, one of which is the Monterey cypress, now a dominant tree at Land's End.

The blue gum eucalyptus, of which there are a couple small groves, and the French broom plant are also imported.

Amphibians and snakes

The ubiquitous California slender salamander is still in the area, as is the large arboreal salamander.

There used to be naturally occurring seepage marshes at Land's End that supported a number of indigenous amphibians, most of which are now gone from the area. The freshwater marshes are no longer except for the seasonal pond in the West Wash area.

The California newt was last reported in the 1970s. The western toad is now gone, and the Pacific treefrog has not been reported in many years. The red-legged frog, once at home in the seepage

marshes, is probably now extinct at Land's End after facing increased competition for space from the bullfrog imported from the eastern United States as well as the drainage and eradication of artificial ponds.

Of the two lizards indigenous to the Land's End area, the northern alligator lizard is still present with a small population, but the western fence lizard is now absent.

Two species of snakes, the race and ringneck, are believed to have been at Land's End when Spanish explorers first arrived to the Bay Area, but have not been sighted in recent times.

The western terrestrial garter snake is still around, as is the occasionally seen gopher snake.

Mammals

The most common bat in San Francisco, and the Richmond District as well, is the California bat. Most bats, including the California, are harmless to humans and the chances of being bit by a bat are near nil. In fact, they should be welcomed as neighbors because they eat many times their weight in insects.

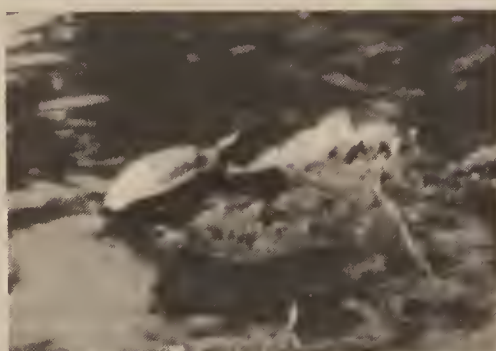
The only mole native to Land's End is the broad-footed mole, which also devours insects. It burrows just under the ground, leaving a raised bulge above the surface.

Raccoons and the striped skunk are also natives still residing in Land's End. Raccoons are smart animals and often wander long distances from their home. District residents out late at night may encounter them, scurrying along the sidewalks and through underbrush, looking for food.

The striped skunk is less common than the raccoon but is still occasionally seen in the Land's End area.

The eastern grey squirrel, introduced to Sutro Heights Park from the eastern United States, lives in the Land's End area and is blamed for the lack of breeding birds in the area, because they eat the birds' eggs.

Other residents include the Botta pocket gopher, California ground squirrel, which has one thriving colony located near the Cliff House Restaurant, field mice and the shrew-mole, which has



Wildlife that can be seen at Land's End includes (clockwise from upper left) the great egret, Botta pocket gopher, the northern alligator lizard and the Pacific pond turtle.

Photos: Al Kurz

been seen at Fort Miley.

Neither the Norway and nor black rats found in this area are natives; however, both have adapted and now depend on humans for survival.

Former residents of Land's End include the grey fox, long-tailed weasel and the American badger — all now lost. The grey fox has not been reported for about the past 10 years and the weasel is limited today to "large" parks, according to a national park naturalist.

Birds

Of migratory bird species, Land's End still has most of what were native species in San Francisco during pre-white settler days.

The rare savannah sparrow, once uncommon at Land's End, now migrates to the salt marsh

grass environment of Sutro Pond. As well, rare ducks also migrate to the pond.

The more common non-migratory birds in the Land's End area include the mourning dove, scrub jay, chestnut-backed chickadee, bushtit, brown towhee and the house finch.

Other common birds that were introduced by humans include the pigeon, rock dove and house sparrow, which is not a true sparrow.

Some of the less common birds found at Land's End include the Downey woodpecker, crow, raven, pygmy nuthatch, California quail, Bewick's wren, Hutton's viree, mockingbird, red-shouldered hawk, and the rare wren, hairy woodpecker, black phoebe and white-breasted nuthatch, which has been seen in recent years at

Lincoln Park.

Great horned and barn owls have also been sighted in the Land's End area, according to sources with the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Much of the diversity of plant and animal life at Land's End is protected because the area is within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and comes under the protection of federal, state and City laws. It is illegal to remove or hunt plant and animal species on GGNRA property or to introduce any non-native species which could be a serious threat to the survival of an existing species.

Al Kurz has a bachelor's degree in biology and has been studying the flora and fauna of San Francisco for the past nine years.

City water fair comes to the Richmond

Continued from page 2

The Richmond District fair will be conducted on Saturday, April 6, at the Fulton Playground at 27th Avenue and Fulton Street from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Additionally, a new San Francisco Health Department policy was also announced, permitting some residential uses of so-called "gray water," which is

wash and rinse water from sinks, bathtubs, showers and laundries.

Under new health department drought guidelines, gray water may be used for toilet flushing and for some watering of outdoor gardens or outside cleaning.

More information on gray water use is available by contacting the Water Quality Section of the Bureau of Environmental Health at 468-

1210.

According to Agnos, it would take 50 additional inches of rain in the Sierra Mountains by July to fill City reservoirs. So far this year, there have been about 20 inches of rain at O'Shaughnessy Dam, which has an average of 35 inches a year.

"There is never enough water to waste and we cannot let up on our efforts to save water at every opportunity," Agnos said.

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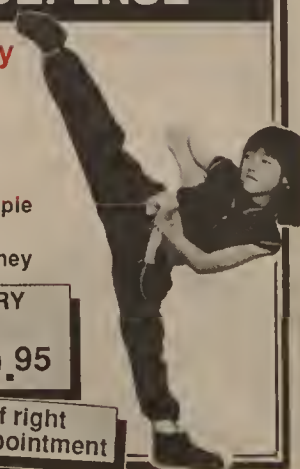
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Retired reformer still at work

Continued from page 1

Christensen's early memories are of endurance and survival — horses, farmers plowing the land, smelling the earth, tasting it.

"Those visions stick to my mind more than anything," Christensen grew up in a context where everyone had a very special relationship to the earth, a deep respect and an unconditional attachment to the land and fundamental values.

When World War II broke out, Christensen joined the Navy. He was in Intelligence Unit for two years before his education took a new turn, and he became a member of the Chaplain Corps.

He abandoned law studies and turned to humanities. Soon, Protestant-raised Christensen realized that the Episcopal Church allowed more latitude for differences of religious opinion, and chose to pursue his more liberal theological studies.

Meeting Dr. Jacob Lowenberg, head of the philosophy department at the University of California changed Christensen's life.

"He made me comfortable with my agnostic beliefs. As a religious person, I was living through tremendous conflicts," he said. "I learned not to be afraid of the word agnostic."

Though his whole life has been devoted to parish ministries, Christensen still calls himself an agnostic today.

"Agnostic doesn't mean you don't believe in God, just that you don't know for sure," he said.

Sharing with Lowenberg a lot of disbeliefs, Christensen approached his religious pursuit with renewed strength. Lowenberg's conduct during the McCarthy era was exemplary, remembers Christensen.

"Here was a man who led, almost single-handedly, the whole intellectual community against McCarthyism. He was quite an amazing model of courage and intellectual honesty."

Christensen never limited his activities to

church duties. He wrote weekly columns in the San Francisco Examiner, worked on assignments for the Associated Press and United Press International news agencies and participated in numerous talk shows on radio and television.

Christensen's religious guidelines are open to all. "Everyone is human; all one should do is to thrive to become more human."

"I don't respect people who claim to have inside tracks with God. It's a form of arrogance and stupidity. What's wrong with mystery? Why give explanations about the unexplained?"

"To me, mystery is the key word to life. The gift of wonder and curiosity is, maybe, precisely where God exists," says Christensen. "When a priest refuses to bless someone because he thinks the person doesn't deserve it, to me, he is a fake."

Christensen had no problem communicating with the flower children in the 1960s.

"I realized that all they were trying to do was to love in their special ways," he says. With the daily contact and counseling of the widest range of people, Christensen says he developed more tolerance.

"When religion becomes so dogmatic that it loses touch with the people and with the times, something has to be done," says Christensen, remembering Bishop Pike, a doctor of law and close friend, who told him that the "church was being dragged kicking and screaming into the 20th century."

With that in mind, Christensen led many reforms, one of which was the religious instruction of women at a time when women were prohibited from participating in the conduct of religious services.

Christensen's retirement is an active one. He still volunteers his religious services, particularly for people who have died of AIDS.

"Being gay today is not the same as it was," he says, remembering how, twenty years ago, a professor of his committed



Pastor Max Christensen emphasizes a point during a conversation in the study of his Laurel Heights home.

Photo: Paul Kozakewicz

suicide when the administration found out he was gay.

"Yet there are still many families who, for example, have never left their native Minnesota and who have a hard time dealing with their son's death from AIDS," he said.

"I explain to the family that being gay is not the end of the world, that they should not ban their son from their love. Being gay is just another facet of humanity, they should be proud and love their son for whoever he was."

Though his philosophy reflects simple common sense, love and acceptance of all differences, Christensen's library is filled with theology books. On the bookshelves are family pictures and children's drawings. Christensen shows each picture with pride.

His family is the most important thing in the life of Max Christensen. He spends as much time as possible with his wife of more than 40 years, Barbara, their four children and two grandchildren.

His study, where he has three books in progress, is very organized. "Turning

Points," about to be published, is a collection of essays he published in the Examiner, recounting the transcendental moment in the lives of individuals like Saint Francis and Mohandas Gandhi.

Another writing project is a novel about the life of a parish priest. As a pastor, Christensen heard many confessions of sin, including adultery and other infidelities.

"One doesn't have the right to judge and condemn suffering souls. In my book, I try to personalize the seeking individuals and render to everyone their humanity."

Christensen likes to quote poetry generously in conversation. When reflecting on human nature, he recalls two lines from Thomas Gray's "Eulogy Written in a County Churchyard":

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear..."

Christensen's eyes light up, and the calmness of his voice combined with his gentle gestures express — better than words — his tranquil strength and his passionate quest for truth and unconditional love.

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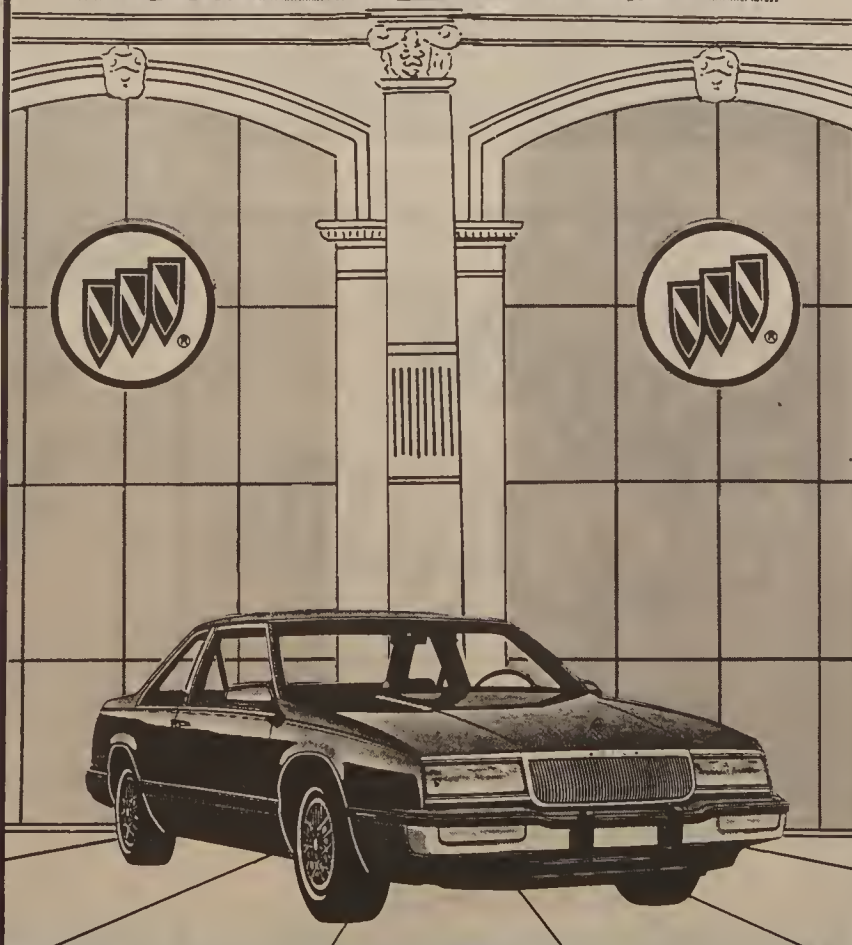
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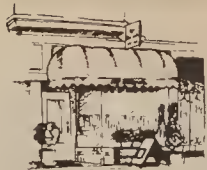
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Balloons and buddies



Photo: Karol Dietrich

John Riggio, background with child, hosted a luncheon for underprivileged children at his restaurant.

Cafe Riggio and USF host youngsters and 'best buddies' at annual lunch benefit

by Karol Dietrich

"Table for 93 please."

"Right this way," proclaims John Riggio, owner of the Cafe Riggio.

The occasion for the near-maximum room attendance? Riggio, along with the University of San Francisco's chapter of Anthony Shriver's "Best Buddies" program, hosted the third annual "Children's Luncheon" for underprivileged youths at his Geary Boulevard restaurant in March.

"I'm continuing a family tradition begun by my mother in Chicago 50 years ago," said Riggio.

"It is our way of giving something back to the community."

The "Best Buddies" program, sponsored in part by the university's campus ministry, brings disadvantaged children together with college-age students who share time with their "buddy," tutoring and providing a voice on the phone when they might not have had such a good day.

This year's children's luncheon at the cafe, located at 4112 Geary Blvd., also had some pretty tall

help.

Members from the USF Don's men's and women's basketball teams assisted in serving lunch to children from the Hamilton Family Center, the Tenderloin Recreation Center, and the St. Boniface Church. Entertainment was provided by "Jimbo the Clown."

Nearly as fast as lunch appeared, the youngsters made it disappear. They quickly consumed a gourmet pasta lunch so they could proceed with their rain-threatened day, which promised to be "egg-citingly" adventuresome.

The Easter Bunny had been to USF's Lone Mountain campus and decorated the lush lawns with brightly colored eggs. There they lay in wait for the eager fingers of the well-fed troopers, en route, to seize them from their hiding places.

But, before the children could stampede the bunny trail, Riggio, along with his wife Jan and son J.D., thanked them for coming, saying, "We'll see you all back here next year."

Atop Lone Mountain, the children were nearly impossible to

contain. At the direction of their college buddies, they were given official egg hunting directions. The word was given, and 93 youths scrambled onto the egg-decorated lawns. Colorful eggs were whisked up and, in a matter of minutes, the area was swept clean.

After the children's joyful squeals had dissipated, they were coaxed into the dining hall at the Lone Mountain campus for two hours of games with their buddies.

Stephanie Blount, a sophomore at USF, said being a buddy is "immensely rewarding because you know you're helping some child who needs you."

USF has help for businesses with telephone blues

Help is available for small businesses confused by the complexities of today's various telephone systems.

The university's Telecommunications Program in the McLaren School of Business and Applied Communications Technology have produced "TeleFacts Guides," a series of free booklets for small and minority businesses.

The guides show how small businesses can most effectively use telecommunications and explain in non-technical language telephone technologies and services.

The topics covered include cellular telephones, choosing a long-distance carrier, modems, facsimile transmission, special services and discounts, pay phones, telemarketing and voice mail.

The guides are available from the Telecommunications Program at U.S.F. For more information, call 666-2506.

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I had the pleasure recently of meeting with supervisor and mayoral candidate Tom Hsieh at the Association of Realtors to discuss two of the real estate issues currently facing the SF Board of Supervisors. The specific issues we touched upon were vacancy control and transfer tax increase.

Vacancy control is a measure that maintains the same rental rate when a unit changes tenants. Currently, when a tenant vacates a unit, landlords can increase rental rates to whatever the market will bear. Supervisor Hsieh is against vacancy control, calling it a regressive policy. However, he feels it will be passed by the current board of supervisors.



City Supervisor Tom Hsieh

Proponents for vacancy control argue that it keeps the rents affordable. Opponents charge that, if vacancy control passes, landlords will not be able to maintain rental properties because of their reduced cash flow. In addition, they fear that tenants will abuse the system by subletting the units to others at a higher price than their rental rate, then pocketing the portion rightfully belonging to the landlord.

The transfer tax is assessed on real estate when it passes from one owner to another and is usually paid by the sellers at the close of escrow.

The tax is set at \$5 per \$1,000 of the real estate purchase price. A proposal to increase this tax to \$11 per \$1,000 (a 120 percent increase) was reduced to \$7.46 per \$1,000 at the supervisor's Finance Committee level, but rejected by the board of supervisors (seven to four) last year.

However, because of the City's projected \$160 million deficit this year, Mayor Agnos has been attempting to revive this proposal to tax the sellers once again. With the new makeup of the board of

Tom Hsieh on real estate issues

by John M. Lee

supervisors, it is unclear how the votes will go this time around.

Supervisor Hsieh opposes the transfer tax and any type of tax increase. His conviction is that the City needs to reduce its expenses before taxing the people of San Francisco.

"I have seen our government act irresponsibly with our tax dollars for the past three years," states mayoral candidate Hsieh.

The mayor and the board of supervisors are currently looking at freezing the wage increase for City employees, estimated at \$75 million in payroll savings.

However, according to Hsieh, this would only defer the problem to next year, when it will become a \$150 million payroll problem. In 1987, Mayor Agnos froze City salaries because of the deficit, but withdrew the freeze the following year, adding a retroactive raise.

Hsieh also raised the issue of 1,500 added employees to the City staff over the past three years, giving San Francisco the highest ratio of city employees per capita in the nation. He posed the question, "With so many people working for the City, have any of the problems been solved? The crime rate has gone up, our schools are cutting programs, library services are cut, graffiti is rampant and drug use is up."

The government's solution to meet the deficit has always been to cut services. But if we cut services, what are all these City employees going to do? Hsieh sees a lot of waste in the City government. If elected mayor, he promises to see that the fat is trimmed before any taxes are raised.

Hsieh also revealed a startling statistic that the City spends about \$23 million on workman's compensation, with the average claim by a City employee of 35 days per year. This is seven working weeks. Hsieh said that if the City were a private enterprise, these employees surely would be scrutinized and possibly fired.

When pressed on the issue of whether he would lay off people if elected mayor, he answered that it would be his last alternative. He would try to reduce payroll by attrition first, by not replacing people who leave their positions of their own accord, and offering

early retirement benefits to qualified employees. He would reexamine the salary increase formulas, developed more than a decade ago, and modify them to fit today's needs and budget.

He would also get rid of all the deputy mayors – saving three-quarters of a million dollars. Hsieh said the saving is not substantial when compared to a \$160 million deficit, but it would be symbolic of trying to cut the waste out of government spending.

"Increasing taxes and laying off people would be my last resort. If elected mayor, I would look for ways to reduce the City's expenses before looking for ways to increase any taxes. I would like to turn this city back to a 'City That Knows How' once again."

Hsieh has always been labeled a fiscal conservative, and, based on his past political record and our interview, he should prove to be a mayor who will protect real estate interests.

In the meantime, the real estate market has changed dramatically with the end of the Middle East war against Iraq. Buyers have been buying once again, and I have been seeing multiple offers on properties that are priced right. Mortgage interest rates have inched up slightly, but are still low compared to the rates of the past five years. The economists I have spoken to all agreed that we are possibly at the bottom of the recession and that the real estate market has seen its worst days.

John M. Lee graduated from UCLA with an MBA in real estate and finance and is a real estate broker at Century 21 Herd and Co. If you have any questions regarding real estate, you can call him at 992-4900.

Senator Marks tries to ban employment credit checks

California employers will be prohibited from using consumer credit reports as a screening tool in hiring new employees or to monitor existing employees, under legislation introduced by state Senator Milton Marks.

Currently, any private employer has the right to review the credit history of persons applying for jobs. The job applicant is not entitled to notification that such a credit check has been conducted. Existing law also allows employers to monitor the credit history of their existing employees.

Marks said he introduced Senate Bill 473 because the use of credit reports for employment purposes has mushroomed in recent years.

"We seem to be opening up our personal financial histories to all who ask, regardless of a demonstrated need for that information," he said.

"For example," Marks noted, "a department store can legally check the credit history of any person who applies for a job, without obtaining the applicant's permission or even informing him or her that a credit check will be conducted."

Furthermore, studies have concluded that a substantial amount of the information contained in credit files is erroneous, so conceivably a person might be denied a job because of inaccurate material in a credit file that the applicant had no idea was even being reviewed.

"There may be some legitimate instances where a potential employer might need to examine the credit histories of job appli-

cants – where national security is involved or the employee must be bonded – but I do not believe that employers have an unfettered right to examine the financial background of their employees, let alone those who merely apply for jobs," Marks said.

Marks also introduced SB 472, which would require banks to disclose their reporting practices with respect to the checking account experiences of their customers. Most banks in California subscribe to a reporting agency that obtains and disseminates informa-

Continued on page 14

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A Jigsaw Puzzle in Progress

Did you know that, because you live in Northern California, you are probably in a very high tax bracket? This is one of the extraordinary prices that we pay for living in Northern California because of the high cost

Federal and state tax rates

FEDERAL		
TAX	SINGLE	JOINT
15%	\$<19,450	\$<32,450
28%	19,450-47,050	32,450-78,400
33%	47,050-97,620	78,400-162,770
STATE		
1-6%	\$<21,875	\$<43,750
8%	21,875-27,646	43,750-55,292
9.3%	>27,646	>55,292

of living, especially for housing. Because of these high living costs, Bay Area salaries generally exceed those in most of the U.S. Higher salaries translate into higher tax rates on the income that you earn because the federal income tax rate schedule is national.

For tax year 1990, you can see from the table to the left that you probably fall into high federal and state tax brackets.

Between federal and state taxes, you could be paying 35 percent or more in taxes on your higher pay rate. What are the best strategies that you can employ to reduce your tax liability?

Tax-Free Money Funds

If you fall into the higher tax bracket and you have savings, you may benefit from tax-free money market funds. These funds invest in high-credit quality, short-term investments and debt issued by the government and large corporations.

Why keep your savings in a

The Financial Advisor: Tax strategies

Eric Tyson

fully taxable savings account earning only 5 percent interest when you could be earning more tax free? For example, you can currently earn 4.4 percent in a California money market fund, which is exempt from both federal and state taxes. You would need to earn nearly 7 percent in a fully taxable savings account to yield 4.5 percent after taxes, assuming you are in the 28 percent federal and 8 percent tax brackets.

Retirement Savings Plans

You can also reduce your current tax bill and work towards financial independence by taking advantage of a retirement savings plan. Everyone has access to one of these plans either through their employer, through self-employed earnings, or through an individual retirement account (IRA).

of your employed income just to maintain your current standard of living through retirement.

The sooner you start saving the better. Don't wait until you are in your 40s or 50s to start saving because you will be sacrificing valuable tax benefits today and putting yourself in a position where you will need to save in excess of 25 percent of your annual income.

Employer-sponsored and self-employment plans allow you to save a percentage of your income without paying current federal and state taxes. Your contributions also grow tax-free over time and are not taxed until you withdraw them in retirement.

Anyone who has self-employment income may set up, at no cost, a simplified employee pension plan (SEP) or Keogh plan to save money in this fashion. If you are a small business owner, this is critical to your future financial security, because you cannot fall back on a pension that a large employer might provide.

If your employer does not have a retirement savings plan and you do not have self-employment earnings, you may contribute up to \$2,000 of your income annually to an individual retirement account (IRA).

If you already are covered by a retirement plan through your employer or from your self-employment plan, and have taxable income of more than \$35,000 if you're single or more than \$50,000 if you file jointly, you will not be able to deduct your contribution to an IRA. It may still make sense to contribute to an IRA but only if you have already exhausted contributing to your employer's or to a self-employed retirement savings plan.

Here's an example to demonstrate the value of saving through a retirement savings plan. Suppose your income is \$30,000 and you are able to save 12 percent, or \$3,600, through an employer-

sponsored or self-employment retirement savings plan. Let's compare what happens to savings through a retirement plan versus saving in a taxable account over 20 years. This example assumes you can earn 8 percent per year on your investment and that your tax rate is constant over time.

TAXABLE ACCOUNT

Year 1: Savings = \$2,300
Taxes = \$1,300
Year 20: After Tax Value = \$6,000

RETIREMENT ACCOUNT

Year 1: Savings = \$3,600
Taxes = \$0
Year 20: After Tax Value = \$10,500

As you can see, the retirement account ends up having an extra \$4,500 after 20 years on just a \$3,600 contribution. This is because with the taxable account, you would only have \$2,300 working for you after paying taxes of \$1,300 in year one. The retirement account is also worth more because the interest earnings grow tax free over time.

Readers are encouraged to call 339-2230. Eric Tyson, founder, the Financial Information Center, is a graduate of Yale University and Stanford Business School. The Financial Information Center is a financial advisory service for individuals and small business owners.

Support group for caregivers of the elderly

The San Francisco Institute on Aging sponsors an ongoing, free, daytime support group for caregivers. The group meets twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at the Western Addition Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, 1550 Scott Street (at Geary Boulevard).

The April 2 group features nurse Rachel Gila. She will be teaching "relaxation techniques for caregivers" to reduce stress in their daily lives. The April 16 group meeting features an open discussion about various concerns. Call Ann Comer at 885-7800 for more information.

If you think you're just overweight, take this test:

1. Do you have to catch your breath after climbing stairs? Yes___ No___
2. Is it difficult bending over to tie your shoes? Yes___ No___
3. Do you have trouble keeping up with your kids in the park? Yes___ No___
4. Does going to the beach make you feel uncomfortable? Yes___ No___

If you've answered "YES" to any of these questions, you may be defined as medically obese. If you want to take weight off and learn to maintain your new weight, we urge you to call The OPTIFAST® Program—the hospital-based medical weight management program that succeeds...because it combines our medical, nutritional and behavior modification professionals with your own commitment.

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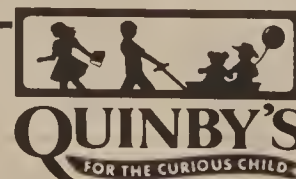


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- Safeway – Cabrillo St./7th Ave.
- Cala – Geary/27th Ave.
- Cabrillo St. at LaPlaya (S.E. corner)



APRIL SPECIAL EVENTS
Celebrate Earth Day at Quinby's
Saturday, April 20, 10:30–11:30 a.m.
A Musical Tribute to Our Planet by Bethie Parent's Choice winner for *Sam the Snake*.

Celebrate all day with books, puzzles, globes, posters, rubber stamps, dinosaur and wild animal replicas. World Wildlife Federation endangered species stuffed animals, a Save Our Earth gift for teachers and a special gift for shoppers who purchase \$15 or more. A 10% discount will be given on a select group of Earth Day related items.

Book Signing: Saturday, April 27, 4–6 p.m.
Come meet Paula Belknap Reynolds, author of *Bay Area Baby*, *The Essential Guide to Local Resources for Pregnancy, Childbirth and Parenthood*, new revised edition. Children welcome.

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Working on the railway



Photo: Courtesy of Greg Garr Collection

LAYING THE RAIL - This is how Balboa Street looked in the early 1930s when the Market Street Railroad Company put a private rail line down the middle of the street.

The rails were later removed and commuter service

was provided by diesel-burning buses.

Currently Balboa Street is getting electrified so today's Muni riders can ride by the less polluting and more cost-effective trolley. The street will be repaved after construction is completed.

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- Daniel Bell, 2nd Grader, Havurah Youth Center



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A drought update

by Mayor Art Agnos

As we've all been seeing recently, there is finally some good news about the drought. We had significant rainfall during the month of March and there is a possibility of more to come.

But, despite the recent rains, we are still in the middle of the worst drought in California's recorded history.

San Francisco's water system is currently one million acre-feet short of capacity, the equivalent of three years of water use.

Even with the current rains, it would take some 50 inches of rain in the Sierras over the next three months to bring us back to normal. By way of comparison, in the last three months there were less than 20 inches of rainfall in the Sierras.

We are carefully monitoring the Sierra snowpack on a daily basis and revising our projections accordingly.

For now, it is imperative that we maintain the new levels of water rationing that have just gone into effect. But we will constantly be re-evaluating the situation as the snowpack begins to melt through the spring and early summer months.

Regardless of what happens over the next few months, however, there is an essential truth that we must all take to heart: there is never enough water to waste.

We cannot let up in our efforts at water conservation and efficiency just because there have been a few rainstorms.

Like you, my family has been struggling with the issue of water conservation, and those of you with children in the house know especially well what that means.

A few months ago, I checked on our own water use and found that even though we had reduced our water use, we were still using more than our allotment.

So, last month, we installed low-flow shower heads, aerators in our sinks, and water-saving "flapper" valves in the toilets. We now have a bucket in the bathtub

to catch extra water.

Under new Health Department guidelines, this so-called "gray water" from sinks, showers and the rinse cycle of washing machines can be used for toilet flushing, some outdoor cleaning and watering garden plants.

The Bureau of Environmental Health has copies of the new gray water policy available to the public. They can be reached at 468-1210.

Copies will also be available at a series of ten Neighborhood Water Conservation Fairs that the City is presenting during the month of April.

The Water Department, Small Business Commission, League of Urban Gardeners and other organizations will have displays set up at the fairs.

Local hardware stores and merchants will be displaying and selling water conservation hardware. Experts will be on hand to discuss everything from water rationing to drought-resistant plants.

Dates and locations for the fairs are:

Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Sunset (Sunset Recreation Center, 28th Avenue and Lawton Street); Richmond (Fulton Playground, 27th Avenue and Fulton Street); Mission (16th Street and Harrison); Bernal Heights (Bernal Heights Playground, Moultrie Street); Marina/North Beach (Moscone Recreation Center, Chestnut and Buchanan streets).

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Ingleside (Oceanview Recreation Center, Capitol Avenue and Montoya Street); Crocker Amazon/Excelsior (Crocker Amazon Playground, Moscone Street); Bayview/Hunters Point (Joseph Lee Recreation Center, Third Street and Oakdale Avenue); Visitacion/Portola (Portola Recreation Center, Felton and Holyoke streets); Potrero Hill (Potrero Recreation Center, 22nd and Arkansas streets).

Listening, just listening

Dana Perrigan



Sometimes life is simply sitting with your back to the wall of an empty apartment, listening to the wind howl and the rain fall.

If the muscles of your body could groan, or the neurons of your mind could moan, there would be the sound of a lot of groaning and moaning going on.

But since they can't, there is only the sound of the wind ripping through the big cedar in the back yard and rain pelting the bedroom windows.

It is a comforting sound. What makes it even more comforting is that, after finishing a day that had at times seemed intent on finishing me, I had discovered a solitary can of beer in the refrigerator.

(No, I am not advocating alcohol as a way to ease the burden of living. But when you've spent the entire day moving all the earthly possessions you've collected during the last quarter of a century from Sacramento to San Francisco during the middle of a storm, a beer — for those who can handle it — is a blessing.)

Twelve hours earlier, I had driven to the Ryder rental outfit to pick up a truck — a 15-footer with the words "Air-conditioned Comfort" emblazoned across the door.

I wouldn't be needing the air-conditioning, of course, but the observant man behind the counter told me that I would be needing a renewal certificate for my expired driver's license. I told him I had received one a week earlier in the mail. I told him I had probably packed it away in one of the many boxes piled high in my old apartment.

"I'll have to see it," he said.

After returning home and tearing through a half-dozen boxes, I managed to find it. Heartened by my discovery, I returned to the Ryder office — spilling an unopened cup of coffee along the way — and thrust the renewal certificate under the observant man's nose.

I also gave him a credit card for the deposit on the truck.

The credit card, it turned out, was expired.

I gave him another credit card.

"This one's no good until next month," he said.

Two down, one to go. I gave him my last piece of plastic and hoped it would do the job. If not, I would have to make a cash run before I could even begin humping furniture and boxes down two flights of stairs and into the pouring rain.

"Hey," he said, sounding surprised and a little disappointed, "This one's good."

(Fast forward the part about loading the truck. Also the part about the wind blowing the truck all over the road for a couple of hours. Run through the part where I arrive at my new apartment and can't open the truck because the combination lock won't work. Skip the scene where my good buddy shows up just as I've finished unloading.)

After driving back to Sacramento and picking up my car, I stopped off at the empty apartment.

The plan was to pick up the cat and drive another 90 miles in the rain to my new apartment.

That's when I discovered the solitary can of beer and sat back against the wall to listen to the wind and rain.

I had listened to wind and rain before, of course. But never, it seemed, so intently. I listened to the storm as if it were an occupation. As if I were being paid to do it. As if my storm-listening career came with an excellent medical and dental plan.

One day, perhaps, after spending my life listening to the wind and the rain, I would retire — returning occasionally out of boredom to visit my old work mates.

That's how I listened to the wind and the rain.

In the end, I decided to spend the night in the empty apartment. There was a Lucky store half a block away and the oven still worked. I trudged down to the store, picked up a can of cat food for Biff and some frozen pizza for his master.

I fed Biff, ate the pizza and lay down on the floor.

It was dark and there was nothing else to do but listen to the wind and the rain.

And that was enough.

— Letter to the editor —

Editor,

You have it all wrong regarding Karol Dietrich's article on the Presidio's future.

The syrupy rhetoric about the Presidio's future has everyone thinking that this beautiful piece of real estate will be in good hands with civilians who know how to maintain it. Forget the idealistic civilian gaping at the beautiful foliage, which will not be around

long, if the National Park Service gets ahold of it. I should say, they cannot possibly maintain it at all. The Army did, and would, if let alone.

Give this to the park service, as your congressmen and women did Fort Mason, and watch what happens. Fort Mason is already a qualified eyesore. But think of what the Presidio might look like in a few years, forget the rhetoric, write your congressman to turn

over the legislation and give the Presidio back to the Army.

You will be doing yourselves a favor.

Sincerely,
Martin Bonetti

The Richmond ReView

P.O. Box 590596, S.F., CA 94159
221-4228

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The Richmond ReView welcomes all written articles, news tips, feature story ideas, and photographs from neighborhood contributors.

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Employment credit checks

Continued from page 11

tion on the banking histories of their customers.

Last year, Marks successfully carried SB 2751, which made such bank reporting agencies subject to the same laws which govern consumer credit reporting agencies like TRW.

As a result, bank customers now have the right to obtain copies of the information reported by banks and to ensure that the information is accurate and complete.

This year's bill would require banks to tell consumers at the time they open a checking account what their reporting policies are. A study conducted last year by Consumer Action, a nonprofit consumer education and advocacy

organization, found an enormous disparity among California banks in their reporting practices.

For example, some banks report each instance in which a check was written on insufficient funds.

Others are more tolerant and only report instances of fraudulent activity.

Marks said he believes customers are entitled to know "up front" what a bank's policies are.

"Banks have every right to report information they deem important to a reporting service," Marks said.

"However, consumers have an equal right to know what individual banks believe merits reporting, and to make their banking decisions accordingly."

April Calendar of Events

1-7

8-14

Museum Exhibition: The Pacific Heritage Museum at 608 Commercial St. features a free exhibition in the history of flight in the Pacific Rim titled "Wings over the Pacific." The free exhibit is open Mon. - Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. Call 399-1124 for more information.

Lecture: "Children and War" will be the topic when UCSF trauma expert Lenore Terr discusses successful treatment strategies she has devised to help children cope with trauma. UCSF, Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus Ave., Tuesday, April 2; 5:30 p.m. Free.

Breast Cancer Prevention: The American Cancer Society will be presenting programs on early detection and screening at the Richmond YMCA, 360 18th Ave., Tuesday, April 2; 7 p.m. and Thursday, April 4; 11 a.m., 668-2060.

Lecture: Dr. Aron Silken offers a lecture and demonstration on "Effective Treatment for Depression & Anxiety," 626 Balboa St., Friday, April 5; 7 p.m., 647-7955.

SF Rec. Symphony: San Francisco Recreation Symphony will perform at St. Agnes Church, Masonic and Oak Streets, Saturday, April 6; 7:30 p.m. Free, 359-4604.

Jewry in America: Allen Bennet of the American Jewish Congress will discuss the future of Jewry in America at a meeting of the Society for Humanistic Jews at UCSF-Laurel Heights, 3333 California St., Sunday, April 7; 4:30 p.m., 239-6785.

Vegetarian Potluck: The SF Living Support Group is sponsoring a raw vegetarian potluck and lecture. Learn about nutrition and enzymes, 1099 Capitol, Sunday, April 7; noon, Donation. Call 751-2806 for more info.

AIDS Awareness Week: A week-long series of free public events will mark the University of San Francisco's AIDS Awareness Week, informational tables will be set up in Harney Plaza, Monday, April 8; 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; there will be programs all week. Call Tom Matteoli, 666-6207 for more information.

Swig Judaic Studies Lecture: Rabbi Leonard S. Kravitz, will deliver a lecture on the problems of religious belief, USF, Faculty Lounge, Thursday, April 11; 3 p.m., free.

Bringing Business and Government Closer: Business owners and prospective business owners can talk with City bureaucrats, Mayor's One Stop Shop, 100 Larkin St.; noon - 1 p.m.
• Thursday, April 11 - Bureau of Building Inspection (Construction & Inspection)
• Thursday, April 18 - County Clerk's Office (Fictitious Business Name Statement Filing)
• Tuesday, April 23 - Tax Collector's Office (City Business License/Taxes)
• Thursday, April 25 - Department of Public Health (Food Facilities Regulations)
• Tuesday, April 30 - Bureau of Bldg. Insp. (Building Permits)

Democratic Fundraiser: The annual Richmond District Democratic Club dinner fundraiser, Dynasty Fantasy Restaurant, 6139 Geary Blvd., Friday, April 12; for information, call Jennifer Clary, 386-3012

Magical Crowns: Make your own magical crown, hat, or headdress at Helen Crocker Russell Library Courtyard, in Strybing Arboretum, Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way, G.G. Park, Saturday, April 13; 10 a.m. - noon, ages five - 10 are welcome, \$5, 661-0668.

Cello Recital: Richmond District cellist Janice Duffey Yee with Ronald Gibson, piano, will



John Langley Howard, Self Portrait - Exhibit at the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum.

present a recital at Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., Saturday, April 13; 3 p.m. Free, 386-5841.

Los Folkloristas: A Mexican band playing nearly 100 authentic folk instruments performs Saturday, April 13 at 8 p.m. at the Ramada Renaissance, 1231 Market St. To benefit Encuentro del Canto Popular, a Mission District-based cultural collective. Tickets \$15 at BASS. For more information, call 252-5957.

15-21

Community/Police Forum: The forum will meet at the Star of the Sea Grammar School, 360 Ninth Ave., Tuesday, April 16; 7 p.m. For more information, call Officer Jill Connolly, 553-1385 or Pam Matsuda at SAFE, at 553-1984.

Landscape Garden Show: The show takes place at Fort Mason Center, Wednesday, April 17 - Sunday, April 21; Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Thursday and Friday; 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., adults \$8, \$7 seniors, children six - 12 with adult \$1, 221-1310.

Meet the Authors: Michael Castleman: "The Healing Herb" (a comparison of traditional and modern herb-based medicines) and Margit Roos-Collins,

"Flavors of Home" (a guide to edible plants in the Bay Area) will discuss their books at the Richmond District Library on 351 Ninth Ave., April 17; 7:30 p.m. 666-7165.

San Francisco Sculptor Lecture: Thomas Marsh, a respected San Francisco sculptor, will tell the story of how the Goddess of Democracy statue from Beijing's Tiananmen Square came to be recreated as a permanent public work of art in San Francisco. UCSF Clinical Eye Research Building, 374 Parnassus Ave., Saturday, April 20; 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Frances Neer, 626-5313.

Gold of Greece: Jewelry and Ornaments from the Benaki Museum, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, 34th Avenue and Clement Street, April 20 - June 30, Wednesday - Sunday; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Slide Lecture: "The Ancient Civilizations of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador" by Mr. Louis Lake Bryant at USF, Harney Science Center, room 232, Golden Gate at Chabot, Sunday, April 21; 2 p.m. donations appreciated, 232-1330

Comedy: Cantu's Comedy Showcase presents Nancy Corfe, Celia Ann Fox, Andres Littlefield and more at Curtain Call, 1980 Union St. (at Buchanan) Sunday, April 21; 6 to 9 p.m., free.

22-30

Mobile Mammography Van: The UCSF Mobile Mammography Van offers convenient breast cancer screening

for women with no known breast problems. The exam costs \$50 and takes no more than 20 minutes. The only requirement is written or verbal approval from a doctor. Richmond District, UCSF-Laurel Heights at 3333 California St., Monday, April 22 - Friday, April 26; 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., 990-0459 or 476-2193 for appointments.

Richmond District Youth Court: Local teens gain experience acting as attorneys and jurors for their peers; UCSF-Laurel Heights campus, 3333 California St., Wednesday, April 24; 4 p.m., 751-2504.

50 Year Celebration: A dinner dance highlights activities for James Denman Middle School 50th Anniversary, Saturday, April 27; for more information, call Martha Olson 459-4766, or Frank Galo 387-3935.

Developing Co-Housing: The San Francisco Co-Housing Group will host a new membership orientation and potluck brunch, 755 Capp St., Saturday, April 27; 10 a.m., 826-0174.

WalkAmerica: Test your stride on this 20-kilometer walk to support the March of Dimes' Campaign for Healthier Babies. Walk begins and ends on the Great Meadow at Fort Mason, Sunday, April 28; 9 a.m. To register in advance, call 468-7400.

Film Festival: The Canned Film Festival presents "The Sidewalk Motel" as well as live music and works by local homeless artists. The Roxie Theater, 3117 16th St., Sunday, April 28; noon, admission is free with a can of food to help feed the homeless.

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Host Families

Host Families Wanted: Convert your spare bedroom into cash and help a foreign student adjust to

America. Call the S.F. Institute of English at 221-9200 for information.

Miscellaneous

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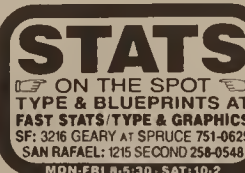
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Homeless Center to open soon

Continued from page 1

Anthony Arturi, homeless program director for the City's Department of Social Services.

Tentative plans allow for 20 additional homeless family members to participate in the daytime program. Arturi said each will be required to have an appointment and will be provided transportation.

Regarding working with the neighborhood before announcing the opening of the new shelter, he said, "We may have really blown it on that one. It's not our intent to hoodwink the community."

Arturi said it was difficult to get preliminary community input because the City didn't know if the building would be avail-

able, and that when it did become available there was little time because the lease had to be signed quickly.

Another concerned citizen is George Patterson, president of Greater Geary Boulevard Merchants and Property Owners Association.

Patterson said he is uneasy about the safety and security of senior citizens in the area near the center. He also expressed alarm regarding the lack of communication between the program's sponsors and Richmond residents.

"I don't object to what they're trying to do," said Patterson. "But these programs can cause crime in the area to increase."

"I'd like to see the project postponed until we get something in writing — some

guidelines. We would like some guarantees that it won't deteriorate into a program for addicts. What's to stop them from changing the use to a residential hotel? Or a shelter for alcoholics, derelicts and drug addicts?"

Director Hill said comparisons with homeless shelters for single adults are unfair because the Richmond program is on a much smaller scale, composed essentially of women and children. He said individuals with substance abuse problems will not be accepted into the program, and that residents will be tested for drug use.

The center will not be like other homeless centers, he said, which feed and shelter a large number of single adults on a drop-in basis.

"This is a totally different population. I personally got a guarantee from (St. Vincent de Paul) that this will never be a single men's home. I give you my personal guarantee," Hill said.

Hill questioned neighborhood concerns about increased panhandling, because families at the center will be receiving about \$800 a month in assistance.

"There will be no need for them to panhandle. If we find someone panhandling, that person will be eligible for dismissal from the program."

He said any law breakers "will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

Residents will be given just one opportunity in the program, and they have to be motivated, said Hill, who plans to live in the center for the first few months of operation. "This is going to be a one-shot deal.

You have to want it."

Good neighborhood relations are critical, said Hill. "We rely heavily on community involvement — families have to feel that they're wanted. And the community is where we get our volunteers."

The community did get involved in a recent meeting where an estimated 100 to 200 locals showed up to hear representatives from the City, St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic Charities.

"I doubt that any minds were changed," said Arthur Jones, a 32-year Richmond District resident who supports the center.

"When it was over, I felt like I was leaving the Coliseum: lions 1, Christians 0."

City homeless director Arturi said it was a "rough" evening. The overflowing main meeting was upstairs and an impromptu meeting was held downstairs at the insistence of some latecomers, he said, who rejected suggestions to leave and attend a future meeting.

Center representatives announced follow-up meetings, and agreed that a meeting would be held with the community advisory committee to amend the contract between the City and the two service organizations, St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic Charities. Some area residents and committee members want to revise the contract to ensure the residence will never become a drop-in center or drug rehabilitation facility.

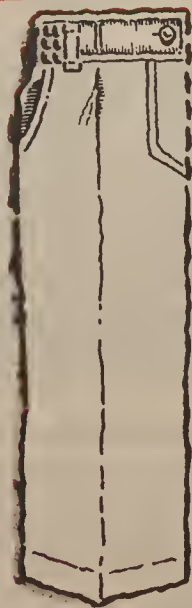
Other residents volunteered to help the center, he said.

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